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TELNO 694

OF 031700Z OCTOBER 85

INFO ROUTINE AMMAN, DAMASCUS, PARIS, RIYADH, TEL AVIV, TUNIS,  
UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON

MY TELNOS 685 AND 691 (NOT TO PARIS): EGYPT/ISRAEL

SUMMARY

1. PRESIDENT MUBARAK AND THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSS THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE PLO HEADQUARTERS BOTH FOR EGYPT'S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND FOR THE PEACE PROCESS, WHICH THEY SEEM DETERMINED TO PURSUE IN SPITE OF THE GREAT DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE ISRAELI ATTACK HAS CAUSED FOR EGYPT.

DETAIL

2. AT SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND DR DAVID OWEN THIS MORNING, PRESIDENT MUBARAK STRONGLY CONDEMNED BOTH THE ISRAELI ACTION IN ATTACKING THE PLO HEADQUARTERS IN TUNIS AND THE US PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC REACTION TO IT.

3. MUBARAK TOLD OWEN THAT HE HAD JUST SENT A MESSAGE TO REAGAN, RECALLING THAT ONLY A FEW DAYS PREVIOUSLY REAGAN HAD EMPHASISED TO HIM IN WASHINGTON THE IMPORTANCE THE AMERICANS ATTACHED TO PUBLIC CONDEMNATIONS OF TERRORISM; YET NOW HE HIMSELF WAS PUBLICLY CONDONING AN ACT OF TERRORISM. THE TIMING OF THE ISRAELI RAID HAD IN MUBARAK'S VIEW BEEN PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE, WHILE BOTH KING HUSSEIN AND THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER WERE IN THE UNITED STATES. MUBARAK ALSO EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT OVER ISRAELI MOTIVES: THEY SHOULD BE USING ARAFAT RATHER THAN JOINING WITH THE SYRIANS IN TRYING TO EXTERMINATE HIM. OWEN SAID HE FULLY AGREED WITH THE PUBLIC POSITION EGYPT HAD TAKEN UP ON THE RAID, BOTH IN CONDEMNING ACTS OF TERRORISM AND AT THE SAME TIME TRYING TO KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS ALIVE. FAR FROM TRYING TO KILL ARAFAT, THE ISRAELI LEADERS HAD TOLD HIM THAT

TO KILL ARAFAT, THE ISRAELI LEADERS HAD TOLD HIM THAT THEY DELIBERATELY TIMED THE RAID TO AVOID DOING SO. OWEN ATTACHED PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO WEIZMANN'S DISSOCIATION FROM THE ISRAELI ATTACK AND SUGGESTED THAT ONE POSSIBLE BENEFICIAL EFFECT MIGHT BE TO RAISE THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE FROM SOMEWHERE NEAR THE BOTTOM TO SECOND PLACE ON THE REAGAN/GORBACHEV AGENDA WHEN THEY MET NEXT MONTH.

4. MUBARAK SEEMED INCLINED TO AGREE THAT THE EFFECT OF THE ISRAELI ATTACK MIGHT BE TO PERSUADE THE AMERICANS TO TAKE THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION MORE SERIOUSLY, BUT HE STRESSED HOW GRAVE AN EMBARRASSMENT THE ATTACK WAS FOR EGYPT'S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HE COULD NO LONGER BE SEEN TO BE EXCHANGING MESSAGES WITH PERES AND HE SEEMED TO ENVISAGE THAT THE TALKS ON TABA WOULD NOW HAVE TO BE SUSPENDED FOR SOME TIME, PROBABLY UNTIL THE NEW YEAR. ANOTHER QUESTION TO WHICH HE SAID HE MUST ADDRESS HIMSELF IMMEDIATELY WAS ISRAELI PARTICIPATION IN THE CAIRO BOOK FAIR, ON WHICH A DECISION WAS NEEDED NOW EVEN THOUGH THE EVENT WAS SOME TIME AHEAD (IT OPENS ON 20 JANUARY); HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO AGREE TO AN ISRAELI PRESENCE AT THE FAIR IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AS THIS WOULD BE BOUND TO PROVOKE HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. IN LOOKING TO HOW THE MOMENTUM OF THE PEACE PROCESS COULD BE MAINTAINED IN SPITE OF THE ISRAELI RAID, MUBARAK RECALLED HAVING TOLD REAGAN IN WASHINGTON THAT IT WAS A MISTAKE TO TRY TO EXCLUDE THE RUSSIANS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE; HE HAD ASKED THE US PRESIDENT WHY THE AMERICANS WERE SO AFRAID OF A SOVIET PRESENCE AS, EVEN IF THE RUSSIANS WERE TO ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO A CONFERENCE, THE MODERATES WOULD BE IN THE MAJORITY AND ANY DIFFICULTIES RAISED BY THE RUSSIANS OR EVEN THE SYRIANS COULD BE DEALT WITH. OWEN SAID HE BELIEVED PERES WAS MORE RELAXED THAN ANY OTHER ISRAELI LEADER ABOUT POSSIBLE SOVIET INVOLVEMENT, ESPECIALLY IF HE SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING SOVIET DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL IN ADVANCE. IF THE RUSSIANS WOULD GIVE HIM THIS (AND OWEN SAID HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT GORBACHEV HAD NOT RULED IT OUT), IT MIGHT HAVE THE EFFECT OF WINNING ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE PROCESS WITHIN ISRAEL TO ENABLE PERES TO PURSUE IT. PERES' INTERNAL POSITION HAD IN ANY CASE BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE RAID. MUBARAK COMMENT THAT, DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PARIS, MITTERRAND HAD UNDERTAKEN TO SPEAK STRONGLY TO GORBACHEV ON THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM.

6. THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, WHOM DR OWEN SAW LATER IN THE MORNING, SAID THAT HE HAD JUST COME FROM THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY WHERE HE HAD BEEN PRESSED VERY HARD BY THE OPPOSITION FOR A COMPLETE BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. ABDUL MAGID RECALLED THAT, AT HIS MEETING WITH SHULTZ IN WASHINGTON ON 23 SEPTEMBER, SHULTZ HAD ENQUIRED BY WHAT MECHANISM THE EGYPTIANS ENVISAGED THAT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST MIGHT BE CALLED. ABDUL MAGID HAD SUGGESTED TO SHULTZ THAT THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS OF DOING THIS MIGHT BE UNDER ARTICLE 99 OF THE UN CHARTER. ABDUL MAGID SAID HE HAD THEREBEEN ENCOURAGED WHEN SHULTZ, DURING HIS SPEECH TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON 26 SEPTEMBER, HAD REFERRED TO THE USE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S POWERS UNDER ARTICLE 99. CHARTER ACT. HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT

